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## Mill added to historic register

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**CENTREVILLE -- The Centreville Mill, erected in 1861 as a textile mill, is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.**

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission Chairman Frederick C. Williamson announced yesterday that the mill was added to the register for its "contributions to the history of architecture and industry."

"For over a century, Centreville Mill was a vital part of the industrial way of life along the Pawtuxet River," said RIHPHC Edward C. Sanderson. "Today this and other historic mills in West Warwick offer valuable opportunities for new economic development, housing and renewed appreciation for the community's heritage."

Having a property listed on the National Register creates opportunities for additional benefits such as making the property eligible for Federal and Rhode Island tax benefits for historic rehabilitation projects, along with special consideration during the planning of Federal or federally assisted projects.

The mill extends along 3 Bridal Ave. in a series of single and multi-story buildings on the 12.7 acre parcel. A dam, headgate, headrace and tailrace are located on the parcel of land.

Complementing the mill is a rare 14.5-foot horseshoe-shaped dam on the Pawtuxet River.

"These are rare in Rhode Island, where dams are mostly gravity barriers that cut straight across the flow," according to William H. Jordy in his book, "Buildings of Rhode Island."

"High banks (here artificially heightened) and rock that is suitable for abutments, however, allow an arched form, which can be thinner because its curved ends thrust into natural rock in line with the flow. The visual result is a pretty horseshoe falls."

Benedict Lapham and his brother Enos Lapham built the three stone buildings where about 350 employees produced about 9 million yards of cloth annually during the 1870s.

Benedict's grandson sold the property to the B.B. & R. Knight Company in 1903. The company was known for its "Fruit of the Loom" fabric. The company added three more buildings to the complex during 1906 and 1909.

Despite the success of the early 1900s, the mill closed during due to the Great Depression. Since then various textile businesses have occupied the mill. Several commercial and industrial businesses currently occupy the Centreville Mill.